

SWAYS records

Independent record label and cultural regenerator
Strangeway Studios, Salford
England
www.swaysrecords.com



MINISTRY OF PROPAGANDA

The Electrification of Salford II

Starring ...

The Louche FC/ Post War Glamour Girls/ Victories at Sea

Saturday 22 October 2011, the King's Arms, Salford

*Fear eats the soul ~ psycho-pop ~ ace of bass ~ film star ~ feedback
~ naked and famous ~ Money talks ~ the Spanish girl ~ blood and
vomit ~ ars erotica ~ Gaddafi ~ 24 hour famine ~ Turkish delight ~
the after-after party ~ the King's is dead ~ what next?*

*THESE are some dark days we're living here ... unemployment, inner city riots, economic implosion, austerity measures ... the cuts hurt and it's the future that suffers as England hangs limply in the hands of ridiculous public schoolboys who truly believe that this nation's saving grace is Eton for all (we say: the Fall). Europe lies in disarray, give a Greek a euro and he'll bite off your ear. A brave new world this, one of regulation, control and human limitation, the blind leading the blind ... A long dark winter lies ahead, especially for those members of SWAYS left to brave it in the bunker. Shells chequer the Chancellery; the Twelfth Army is no more; the Russians are closing in; pressure builds ... And when pressure builds, something has to give. And tonight, *it gives*. It gives in a deluge of feedback, chaos, alcohol, reverb and lust ... But this kind of release comes at a cost. And that cost is all-consuming. You kick out against the real world and the real world kicks back. For it turns out that SWAYS records strike a diabolic pact. They say they're here to help, to provide you with a service, but they'll sure as hell claim their dues, Atrocity Boy. They'll take your sweethearts, your memories, your health, your peace of mind ... And you will *love* them for this. Before tonight, I didn't know what SWAYS stood for, but now I do: SWAYS Will Annihilate Your Soul.*

How the *hell* did this happen?

The night begins in the domed attic of the King's Arms, where the second Electrification of Salford night is underway. The first band on stage are Birmingham electro-post-punks Victories at Sea. Technical failings aside, they impress us, with a taught, spiky Foals-esque opening giving way to a more meditative, post-Joy Division, almost architectural core, as in the sense that these soundscapes have been meticulously shaped and crafted: sculptural, perhaps. These are minds in thrall to music as material and form making psycho-pop in the era of the laptop.



Taking their great name from a John Cooper Clark lyric ('expresso bongo snaps of rome - in the latin quarter of the ideal home - fucks all day and sleeps alone - just a tiger rug and a telephone - says a post war glamour girl's never alone' - that one), Leeds quartet Post War Glamour Girls would appear to have a spiritual home here in Salford. With Wim Wender's *Paris, Texas* forming a striking backdrop to their set, and singing odes to its legendary lead actor Harry Dean Stanton, they draw strongly on influences such as Nick Cave and Modest Mouse and stomp and shout their way through a set that delivers a distinctive brand of northern Americana. I couldn't tell you that much more though, to be honest, because a single overriding fact not lost on any man in the room, in fact any man ever to have watched this band, is that they have the most amazing bassist *ever*. She is stunning. She is in fact my favourite bassist in the history of music. If you could form a fantasy band, she would be in it. It's not often you get to watch your favourite [insert instrument] player live. I couldn't even *tell* you who my favourite guitarist is. Or lead singer. Or



drummer. They're probably dead. But my favourite bassist is very much alive and kicking and tonight she's hypnotic, driving the songs, the strap of her top slipping down her arm and her body gyrating to the rhythm, her bass held tight to her pulsing hips ... I've never envied an inanimate object before, but *oh* to be that guitar ... in fact, I'm not even sure

that thing *is* inanimate, I swear to God when she slung it to her waist it gave her a little hug back ... And every other band in the room turns to their bassist and dismisses them with a shake of the head, *what's the point mate?* The Brown Brogues can be seen hastily scribbling a 'bassist wanted' advert ... And what might otherwise come across as raucous or deranged becomes, in her hands, sultry and sexual ...

What? I liked her.

But tonight belongs to headliners the Louche FC whose star is ever rising and deservedly so. Watched by an adoring crowd and 'that guy from *Dead Man's Shoes*', they take the stage to a scene from *Twin Peaks* and immediately exude authority and presence, with lead singer Kyoko wearing a black florid top like an angel of death. Now with an enviable rhythm section in place, they seem intent on taking every element of their sound to its logical extreme and then beyond. Kyoko's vocal floats beautifully over the dark sea of feedback and reverb cast forth by guitarist Luke, whose amp sweats behind him, a single valve glowing red and aroused as he stalks the stage like a stick insect that's had its drink spiked, or a Victorian rapist nightmared into existence by Hunter S. Thompson.



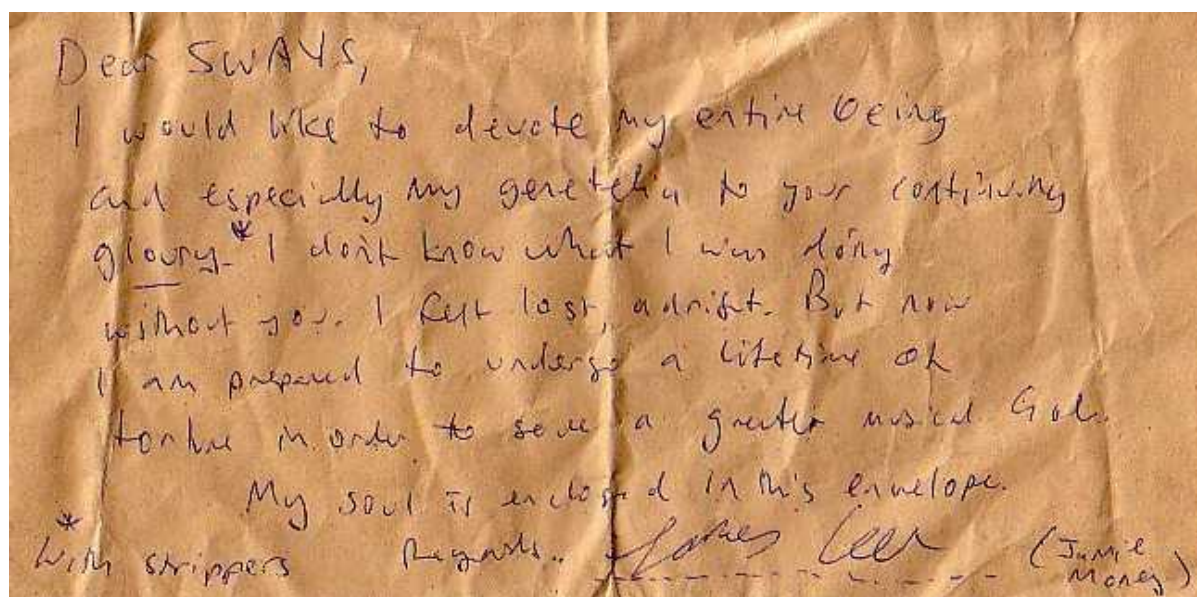
New single 'Romantic' is a highlight: they have this way of producing songs that live with you and fold back into your life, they 'extend the stock of available reality', as R.P. Blackmur put it. Possibly for the first time, it becomes obvious that this band could be massive. They go on past the curfew and the venue pulls the plug on them but Luke continues to rake his guitar over his moaning amp. It doesn't matter, no one cares - turns out we're not coming back here again anyway. This is a shame. We love this place. But there will be other nights, other rooms to electrify ...

'We'll keep on pushing this until someone gets a black eye,' says Luke later, with a wild look, as the party spills through the back streets of Salford, across the canal, past crumbling warehouses, along streets of broken glass and back to SWAYS HQ, a.k.a. the Führer Bunker, where a kind of Bacchanalia unfolds. The sort of night Lars Von Trier might arrange if he was asked to throw a surprise birthday party for Michael Stipe. Bodies are everywhere. A Spanish girl gets naked. The post war glamour girl is unfortunately not here but part of me really believes that this is for

the best. Everything starts to whirl, people argue about butterflies, exit signs never materialise, and in the eye of the storm the people of SWAYS plot their next move, which is sealed with a contract, to mark the new and binding addition of a very special band to their capture list, the growing pack of new music hostages, which is, yes really ... MONEY.

SWAYS got on one knee and popped the question.

Money replied, 'we will.'



The party gets weirder. Bjork's 'Big Time Sensuality' seems to tip people over the edge. More clothes join the empty beer cans and cigarette butts on the studio floor. Everything is caught on film and later locked in a vault in the SWAYS basement only ever to be opened for the purposes of blackmail or extortion, although the Spanish girl is exempt, because we like her. And anyhow, she has fled the country.

'We're about two pairs of trousers away from an orgy here,' mumbles a shell-shocked President, slumped in a chair in the corner drinking rum from the bottle and muttering something about a beautifully disdainful Polish barmaid who works in a rodeo-themed diner in town. He goes there all the time and she has never once said please or thank you but she has *always* worn revealing tops and he thinks he might love her.

The party rolls on to Withington by way of a taxi ride with an impassioned Libyan who talks to us about the death of Gaddafi - one of those great conversations that goes on for ages after the taxi has actually stopped, doubt there's much business knocking around South Manchester at this time of night anyway ...

Eventually we leave him, brothers in arms, and we still have beers and the small hours on our side.

We haven't eaten for days so we stumble to the local chippie where we sit at plastic Formica tables and gorge. We're joined by a drunken Turk who takes a shine to us and tells us about his fighting days in defence of the family kebab house and offers to buy us all a round of pies. We love Manchester because of nights like this and the people who inhabit them.

And then noise pop duo Great Waves decide to play an impromptu Sunday morning set in their living room when better people than us are going to church, and worse people too, and this is fucking glorious, we are *here*, in this moment, euphoric ... And if we didn't know if before, we definitely know now that *something special is going on here* and even if we have no idea what'll happen next or where it'll end *tonight we realise that the whole point is not where we're going but how we get there*.

Atrocity Boy, 30 October 2011